



MEETING MINUTES

Jersey City Environmental Commission
City Hall – 280 Grove Street, Jersey City NJ 07302
Gerald F. Nicholls, Chair
Sara K. Schultzer, Vice Chair

Meeting: Jersey City Environmental Commission Public Meeting

Date / Location: 12 May 2015 – 6:30 p.m.
Caucus Room, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302

Attendees:

Commissioners/City Representatives	Public Participants
Tanya Marione	Daniel Gere (resident)
Gerry Nicholls	Mory Thomas (WPA/JCPC)
Sara Schultzer	Lyndsey Scofield (SJC)
Mario Verdibello	Elna Mukaida (HPNA)
Gabriel Ristorucci	Yolanda Keahey (resident)
Alison Cucco	Bill Montgomery (NJCU)
Allison Solowsky	Elizabeth Reynoso (resident)
	Nick Caballero (WPA)

Prepared By: Sara Schultzer

Date Prepared: 12 June 2015

ROLL CALL

Six of nine commissioners were present; four constitutes quorum. Commissioners Luebke and Goldsmith were absent, and one commissioner position remains unfilled.

SHADE TREE CANOPY STUDY UPDATE

- Reviewed public contributions from the Saturday, May 2, 2015 Open House
- Reviewed what to include in a vision statement
- Finalized goals to include

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE

- Commissioner Luebke to report at June's meeting

OLD BUSINESS

- Draft Sustainability Ordinance Discussion
 - Discussion was made on how to put “teeth” into the ordinance, how to hold developers and property owners accountable, performance metrics, and coordination with Site Plan approvals
 - Lyndsey Scofield from Sustainable Jersey City (SJC) asked about
 - Implementation

- Accountability/enforceable
 - Timeline
- Draft Municipal Action Resolution on Climate Change
 - Developing issue
 - Lowering emissions
 - Metrics of greenhouse gases
 - Impact on climate change
 - What is our current usage & sources greenhouse gases?
 - What components can we change? Cost benefit analysis.
 - Public/Private partnerships for data collection; collaborative3 inter-educational program
- Shade Tree Commission Letter
 - Chairman Nicholls drafted letter and requested comments from commissioners and the public. Letter will be sent to the Mayor the week following this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- Discussion of future studies
 - Urban Heat Island Mitigation (trees & infrastructure)
 - Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan
 - Tree Inventory
 - Community Forestry Management Plan (Department of Public Works)
 - City-wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Carbon Footprint (see Climate Change item in OLD BUSINESS above)

GENERAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Attendees were encouraged to offer feedback:

Lyndsey Scofield, SJC

- Announced June 11th event in at Casa Columbo exhibiting Rutgers Landscape Architecture Studio Course students' work
- Announced SJC Green Drinks

Nick Caballero, resident

- Announced event Saturday May 16th 9am-3pm in Washington Park

Yolanda Keahey, resident

- Main Street in Bergen Hill; Inquired about Redevelopment Plan and incorporation of trees
- Discussed the width of the sidewalk and roadway in relation to ADA rules and tree planters

Bill Montgomery (NJCU)

- Discussed ways NJCU can partner with the EC and City on environmental initiatives and coursework



APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Agenda for upcoming meeting and Minutes from previous meeting are posted on the website.

The 14 April 2015 Meeting Minutes were tabled.

CLOSING REMARKS AND OTHER BUSINESS BY COMMISSIONERS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Commissioners to review and comment on Tree Canopy Report before next meeting
2. Commissioners to develop coordination list of EC initiatives

NEXT MEETING

The next Environmental Commission is scheduled for 16 June 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302.





Mayor Steven M. Fulop
Gerald F. Nicholls, Chair
Sara K. Schultzer, Vice Chair

31 May 2015

Mayor Steven M. Fulop
Office of the Mayor
City Hall - 280 Grove Street
Jersey City, NJ 07302

Re: Recommendation to Constitute the Shade Tree Commission

Dear Mayor Fulop:

We prepared this letter to communicate our support for constituting a Shade Tree Commission in Jersey City. We hope that you find this recommendation useful and consistent with your vision for Jersey City. In this letter, we provide background information on a Shade Tree Commission and benefits that Jersey City would reap from having such a commission.

A Shade Tree Commission was established on 6 June 2005 by the Council of the City of Jersey City under Ordinance No. 05-075, which created Chapter 10 - SHADE TREE COMMISSION of the municipal code. A copy of the code is attached to this for your reference. The Shade Tree Commission, however, was never constituted.

During the recent completion of the Jersey City Tree Canopy Study, the Environmental Commission (EC) learned that Jersey City's tree canopy coverage is 16%, which is relatively low even for densely urban areas. This has cascading negative impacts on quality of life, air quality, stormwater retention, property values, heat-island mitigation, and wildlife.

During the public outreach component of the Tree Canopy Study, the EC also learned that there is a groundswell of residents who want action on improving our tree canopy. Over and over we were asked, "What are the next steps to improving our street trees and holding developers and contractors accountable?" We have conferred with neighborhood associations and local organizations and found universal support for a Shade Tree Commission. Such a commission can provide leadership on policy changes and initiatives to improve our urban environment. Specifically, the Shade Tree Commission can do the following:

- Develop tree protection and replacement ordinances that provide a financial incentive for developers and property owners to enhance tree coverage. The ordinances could also establish a fund for city-wide tree planting and maintenance that would be paid for by developers and property owners whose projects reduce tree canopy.
- Collaborate with the Department of Public Works on public-private initiatives and partnerships.
- Organize community service efforts on the neighborhood scale to improve trees on streets and in parks.
- Provide expertise to residents and city agencies on tree maintenance and planting.
- Provide expertise on incorporating tree canopy enhancements into master and redevelopment plans.

If you decide to populate the Shade Tree Commission, please let us know how we can support you. For example, we can provide a list of highly-qualified volunteers who would be willing to serve their city in this capacity.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely,

Jersey City Environmental Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerald F. Nicholls". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Gerald F. Nicholls, PE, CHMM
GNicholls@jerseycityec.org
Chair

Chapter 10 - SHADE TREE COMMISSION

[HISTORY: Adopted by the Council of the City of Jersey City 6-22-2005, Ord. No. 05-075 Amendments noted where applicable.]

§ 10-1. - Establishment of an advisory shade tree commission; personnel; appointment.

There is hereby established an advisory body which will be known as the Shade Tree Commission of Jersey City. The Commission shall consist of five members appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the Council, who shall be residents of the City of Jersey City and shall serve without compensation.

§ 10-2. - First commissioners; subsequent commissioners; terms.

The first commissioners shall be appointed within sixty (60) days after the effective date of the ordinance establishing the commission, and their terms of office shall commence upon the day of the appointment and be for the respective periods of one, two, three, four and five years beginning on January 1 of the year following appointment. The term of each appointee shall be designated in the appointment. All subsequent appointments, except to fill vacancies, shall be for the full term of five years, to take effect on January 1.

§ 10-3. - Organization of the advisory shade tree commission.

The commission shall organize within thirty (30) days after the appointment of its total membership for the remainder of the calendar year, and thereafter annually by the election of one of its members as chairman and another as secretary. At the request of the commission, the Mayor may designate a member of his staff to serve as secretary to the commission.

§ 10-4. - Functions of shade tree commission; Director of Public Works to cooperate

- A. The Advisory Shade Tree Commission organized under this chapter shall advise the Mayor and Council upon the following matters:
 - (1) The planting and care of shade and ornamental trees and shrubbery planted in any public street, plaza or park, including the trimming spraying, care and protection of such trees and shrubbery;
 - (2) The use of the grounds surrounding such trees and shrubs so far as may be necessary for their proper growth, care and protection;
 - (3) The removal of any tree or shrub dangerous to public safety;
 - (4) The adoption of any ordinance or legislation necessary for the care and protection of trees, shrubs and park lands within the City;
 - (5) Consistent with applicable laws, the treatment or removal of any trees or shrubs on private property which may present a risk to trees and shrubbery under the care of the City or to public health in general.
- B. The Director of Public Works shall delegate one of his or her staff to attend each meeting of the shade tree commission and shall provide the commission with informational copies of any work orders and any requests by residents for the planting, care, and removal of any shade trees. The Director shall also seek the advice of the shade tree commission prior to the planting of any shade trees and, except in emergencies, prior to the removal of any shade trees.